MORTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Kyle L. Kirchmeier, Sheriff

News Release
For Immediate Release
September 3rd, 2016
Contact: Morton County PIO, Donnell Preskey (701) 426-1587

Private Security Officers Ambushed and Assaulted by Protestors

Around 2:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon, a group of protestors launched a march from their camp located on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land to where construction was taking place on the Dakota Access Pipeline, on private property on the west side of Highway 1806. This march illegally blocked traffic in both lanes of the roadway.

Once protestors arrived at the construction area, they broke down a wire fence by stepping and jumping on it. According to numerous witnesses within five minutes the crowd of protestors, estimated to be a few hundred people became violent. They stampeded into the construction area with horses, dogs and vehicles.

Protestors physically assaulted private security officers hired by Dakota Access Pipeline. The security officers were hit and jabbed with fence posts and flag poles. According to several reports from security officers, knives were pulled on them or they witnessed protestors with large knives. Below is a summary of reports from numerous security officers.

Security Officer #1 – A crowd of 40-50 protestors pushed him against a vehicle. He was jabbed in the side with a wooden fence pole, kicked in the knees; causing him to fall to the ground. He heard people saying, "stomp him, kick him, he's not going to leave."

Security Officer #2 – As he was getting into his truck, he was hit in the back by a fence post. He witnessed protestors trying to stab K-9's with knives and flag poles. He reported witnessing eight large knives on protestors.

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Security Officer #3 – A protestor pulled a knife on him and his K-9.

Security officer #4 – Was assaulted by a protestor on a horse and was pushed off a construction crossing. His K-9 was stepped on by protestor's horse.

Security officer #1 was taken to a Bismarck hospital. Investigators have taken three formal reports of injuries from security officers. However, according to witnesses several additional security officers were assaulted. Two security K-9's were also taken to veterinarians to be treated for their injuries.

Law Enforcement from Morton County, Burleigh County and Highway Patrol responded to the construction site. The crowd of protestors left the scene without further incident. The Morton County Sheriff's Department in cooperation with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation is investigating the incident.

"Any suggestion that today's event was a peaceful protest, is false. This was more like a riot than a protest. Individuals crossed onto private property and accosted private security officers with wooden posts and flag poles. The aggression and violence displayed here today is unlawful and should not be repeated. While no arrests were made at the scene, we are actively investigating the incident and individuals who organized and participated in this unlawful event," said Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier.

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